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Press Release

*Originally Released:
May 31, 2005*

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ATTORNEY GENERAL DARRELL MCGRAW SUES MICHIGAN POSTER COMPANY FOR DECEPTIVE PRACTICES

Attorney General Darrell McGraw today sued Mandatory Poster Agency, Inc., a Michigan corporation. The poster company called itself "The West Virginia Labor Law Poster Service" and sent a written solicitation to employers in West Virginia offering posters, which are required to be displayed. Specifically, the posters address state and federal laws regarding workplace safety and employee rights. The posters, however, may be obtained free of charge by contacting the West Virginia Division of Labor, Bureau of Employment Programs, at 304-558-1600. The poster company charged \$59.50 for a set of posters and \$5.75 for shipping and handling. Some employers believed that the poster company was a governmental entity. The poster company also held itself out as having a physical business location in South Charleston, West Virginia but, in reality, the address was just a post office box.

In 2001, Attorney General McGraw investigated the same individuals operating under the business name of West Virginia Mandatory Poster Agency. That investigation culminated in a signed agreement. In the agreement, Mandatory Poster Agency, Inc. promised to clarify that the posters may be obtained free of charge from appropriate governmental agencies and that its business was not a government agency.

Recently this company sent out solicitations that were similar to those that prompted the 2001 investigation by the Attorney General. The business name of the poster company, however, was changed from the West Virginia Mandatory Poster Agency to the West Virginia Labor Law Poster Service. Nevertheless, the defendant did not clearly and conspicuously disclose in its 2005 solicitations that the posters may be obtained free of charge from the appropriate governmental agency and that, in fact, it was not a government agency. The Attorney General's Office received complaints from West Virginia citizens that the solicitation appeared to be from a governmental organization.

"This business is masquerading as a governmental organization in order to sell posters for outrageous amounts," said Attorney General McGraw. "This deception is particularly problematic because the posters are free from legitimate governmental agencies."

The lawsuit, filed in Kanawha County, seeks injunctive relief, restitution for those affected, civil penalties, costs, and attorneys' fees. Anyone purchasing a poster from the West Virginia Labor Law Poster Service is encouraged to call Attorney General McGraw's consumer protection hotline at 800-368-8808 or 304-558-8986.

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